

the information-delivery bias of the national curriculum in practice amounts to a disenfranchisement of large sectors of the population.

That said, there is a lot useful material in this book. At the heart of it is Patrick O'Connor and Melanie Petch's 'Merleau-Ponty, Writing Groups and the Possibilities of Space' (pp. 75-97), which uses Merleau-Ponty's concept of the 'embodied writer' to analyse how students relate to their writing. To get students (and academics) to see writing as an active rather than a passive activity—think of the classic notion of 'writing-up'; the very last thing one does after the real work of research—they advocate writing groups, where writing is embedded and embodied in a social and dialogic context. If there's one overall thesis in this book—which takes a number of divergent but for the most part complementary approaches—it's this emphasis on writing groups and the mutual support and platform for discussion that they provide.

In particular, Clughen and Matt Connell's 'Using Dialogic Lecture Analysis to Clarify Disciplinary Requirements for Writing' makes the case for the social space of writing and presents a number of strategies and techniques for developing it. This is something that is fairly obvious in the creative writing sector, and is one of the functions of the writing workshop (there are others), but it is good that there is only one brief reference in passing to creative writing in the whole book. There are wider concerns here.

Which is an apt point to return to the mess. There are dozens of little errors in this book, from mistakes in punctuation, to uncoordinated sentences to missing words. Nothing that a decent proofreader wouldn't weed out, but characteristic of the current time-pressured and REF-pressured state of UK academia. Yet so much of this book is about giving students (undergraduate and postgraduate) time to write, not 'write up' or just get things down. It is a book that should not become just another disposable outcome of the academic machine, when so much of what it says provides cogent, often implicit, criticism of the machine itself.

Increasing Student Engagement and Retention Using Social Technologies: Facebook, E-portfolios and Other Social Networking Services

Laura A. Wankel and Patrick Blessinger

Emerald Group Publishing Limited (2012)

Review by Lisa Hayes

This book is the seventh volume in a series entitled 'Cutting Edge Technologies in Higher Education' which addresses a variety of social media issues. The book is composed of ten chapters (approximately 300 pages) contributed by a range of authors. The chapters are divided into two parts, the adoption of social media, and the application of social media, and present case studies, surveys and literature reviews to examine how social media technologies are being used to 'improve writing and publishing skills in students, create engaging communities of practice, and how these tools are being used for e-Mentoring and constructing online reputations.'

The book addresses a hot topic in higher education, and does so by presenting a range of different approaches, all claimed by the editor to utilise the spirit of social constructivism –

that is active engagement of students in the learning process, use of all types of models for learning and with the role of the teacher being seen as expert guide. The abstract (chapter one) provides a brief, albeit useful synopsis of social media and an overview of the content of each chapter, enabling the time-pressed reader to pick and choose appropriately.

Chapter two presents a hypothetical model course, which utilises a portfolio approach not confined to a campus, but through open source technology, in which anyone with Internet access can participate. The authors envisage a world where 'information and learning escape the walls of academia'. The chapter is usefully theoretical, but some may find it lacks clarification on transforming theory into practice.

Chapter three considers how social media can enhance learning by discussing three paradigms of learning. Page 68 and 69 present a useful consideration of where the 'e' (electronic) really matters in learning and the chapter continues to deliver examples of social media enhanced learning platforms drawn from small research projects. These provide some useful illumination and go some way to support chapter one's theoretical slant.

Chapter four considers foreign language students and how social media can be utilised in electronic writing tasks to support engagement. Focusing on a small study in Canada, opportunities and challenges are explained of students using writing six blogs in structured tasks. A succinct conclusion presents that the design of the learning environment matters more than often anticipated or believed.

Chapter five describes a research study which compared the use of Facebook by higher education students alongside data collected related to psychological dimensions. The data presented in the chapter is dense, and the readability is therefore diminished, which in turn, limits the reader's ability to consider what benefit the content may have to their own practice or institution. A clear and succinct conclusion is lacking, adding to a slight sense of confusion in the whole chapter.

Chapter six's complex title belies an intriguing exploration of an engineering course which melded social media, an adaptation of Bloom's taxonomy and a Human Metrics test to group students according to different personality types. This complexity is not carried into the conclusion however, where a very simple premise is presented – students like the use of Internet-based tools.

Chapter seven addresses how learners can be engaged in contextualising grammar by using computer-aided learning, including social media, amongst a range of other technological approaches to learning. The chapter focuses a great deal on strategies related to contextualising grammar; however, this does not limit applicability to other contexts. A highly detailed explanation of the tasks and a clear conclusion make this chapter relevant for course designers across a range of disciplines.

Chapter eight considers how to utilise technology for end-of-term assessments. The authors consider how wikis, blogs and podcasting could be used as an alternative to more traditional

approaches to final assessment in what they term the 'technology-enhanced final project'. The chapter clearly presents three case studies as well as 'tips for implementation'. The authors present an extremely useful exploration into an emerging field. Chapter ten also addresses this area, but in a more general context, and provides a useful table on page 269 summarising how technologies can be utilised to support students in writing-intense courses.

Chapter nine discusses the use of technology to enhance teacher education through technology-enhanced field experience. This approach included social media interviews, video case analysis and web conferencing. The chapter provides a descriptive and interesting case study of a model of in-service teacher training that seeks to utilise technology effectively but is at times thwarted by the everyday experience in school classrooms.

The book is firmly rooted in American higher education establishments, but demonstrates applicability globally and across a range of contexts. It is a useful tool for dipping into appropriate chapters. A consistent theme throughout, is that technology should always be used to enhance learning, and not simply because it is de rigueur. A thread binding many of the chapters is that technology should be embedded effectively and be informed by clear curriculum design, an important message, in the current educational context which can sometimes forget this fundamental premise of learning.

A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education

Jude Carroll

Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (2007, revised 2013)

Review by Philippa Armitage

The title itself suggests that this book may be useful in offering ways to combat plagiarism. If it can be deterred in the first place this would reduce the need for detection. While the book also looks at penalties as a deterrent, the focus of this review will be other forms of deterrent.

The book starts by discussing the definition of plagiarism, which Carroll shows that is not understood in the same way by students and staff. It is important to be able to offer a clear definition of plagiarism so that it then becomes easier to design it out of assessments, and to apply penalties if it occurs as an offence in an academic piece of work.

The book also states that plagiarism is different to copyright, as it not only covers written text, but also ideas of others.

Several reasons are considered as to why plagiarism occurs. In reviewing the issues, the author suggests the Web as one reason for this. When first published in 2002, Carroll suggested that copying from the internet was not the most common form of plagiarism, as students were more likely to copy from other sources including books, journals and the work of other students. In this revised version Carroll states that statistics indicate that this